# YANKEE WINGS©

YANKEE AIR FORCE

Wildcat on Display at Oshkosh
Photo by Jo. Ivens #1657

INSIDE!

Buff Briefs

The Wildcat/Melton Love Affair

Deadly Camel Tallied Combat Kills

Memorial Day/Founders Day Announcements

Vol. 4 No. 3

March 1985

## WILDCAT — WACKY, WONDERFUL WARBIRD!

*Dick Melton, YAF 1955*

Any flyboy. . .opps, I mean flyperson . . .will agree that every airplane has a personality all its own. And the ones I was exposed to from 1943 to '58 as the chauffeur-in-charge of certain airborne hardware belonging to our Uncle's Navy were no exceptions to the rule.

As a for-instance, the Skyraider was a proud and capable servant that practically flew itself if you wanted to just lean back and take life easy, thanks to the magic of an autopilot and an automatic manifold pressure regulator plus power-assisted ailerons, a comfortable and roomy cockpit and more brute horsepower than any three planes should have. The FH-1 Phantom jet (the forerunner of the Banshee; not today's versatile workhorse, the omnipresent F-4) was, under her alluring exterior, a 300-plus-mph Piper Cub.

The graceful Corsair bent-wing birds were spirited mistresses; they could be counted on to respond beautifully to anything you asked of them. . .just so long as you never turned your backside to 'em at slow speed. The Hellcat was a faithful, friendly girl-next-door who made no pretense at being anything other than a tough, businesslike fighter. And the venerable but curvy Dauntless (yep, I do go back that far!) was a crochety, temperamental old broad whom you had to talk into going flying—due in large part, I guess, to the fact that every time I went out with her, our aforementioned Uncle had put her on a low-calorie diet of 91 octane fuel which caused her to emit some surprisingly unladylike loud belches at the most inopportune occasions—on takeoffs, for instance!

But I'm not here to sing the praises of any of these. . .nor do I rhapsodize over the SNJ "Jaybirds," Vultee "Vibrators" or the indestructible Stearman biplanes that replaced them. . .although each of these long-ago loves had her special place in my affections. No—today I'd like to reminisce about a chubby, homely little lady with a heart of gold, (well, maybe steel and aluminum)—the FM-2 Wildcat.

The Wildcat's character was a study in contradictions that was part of her appeal. Sometimes she was a protective mother, other times a patient schoolteacher, still others a capricious tomboy playmate. But knowing her was an unforgettable experience, to say the least!

My romance with the Wildcat began inauspiciously enough. In December of 1944, I arrived in a brand-new Ensign's uniform for fighter operational training at Green Cove Springs in northeastern Florida. Down at the flight line, peeking shyly from behind rows of big, beautiful Corsairs, were a number of oversized beer barrels on their sides, each balanced precariously atop a single roller skate.

A second, longer look corrected this first impression. They apparently were flying machines of some sort, subtly disguised as

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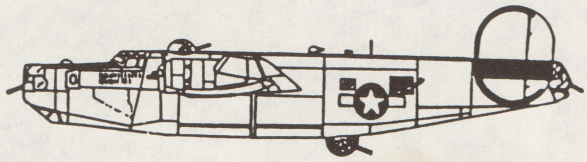

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**Official Publication of The Yankee Air Force©**

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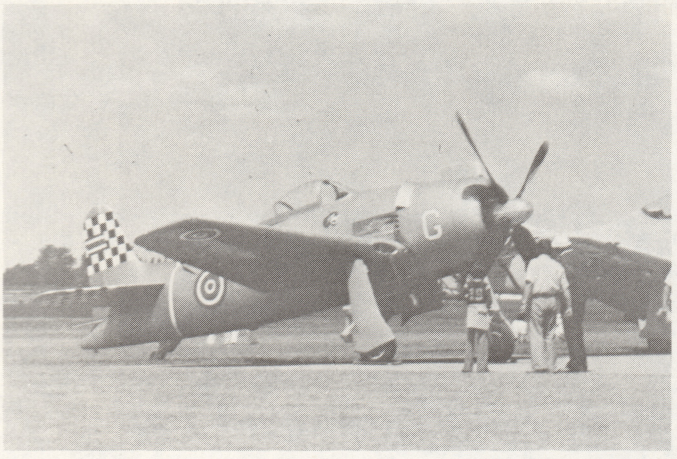
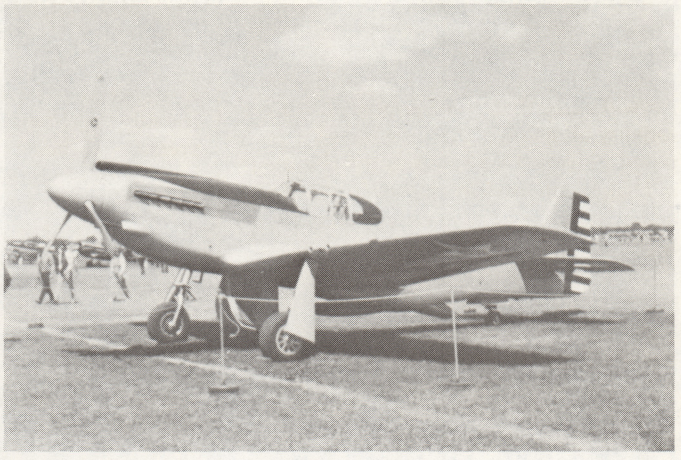
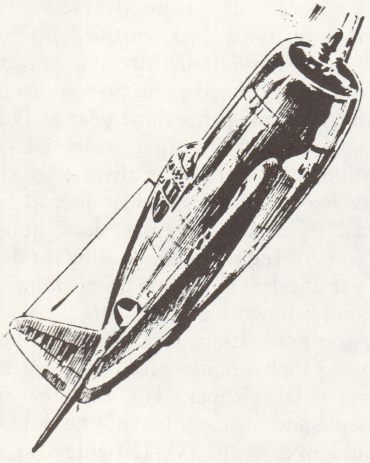
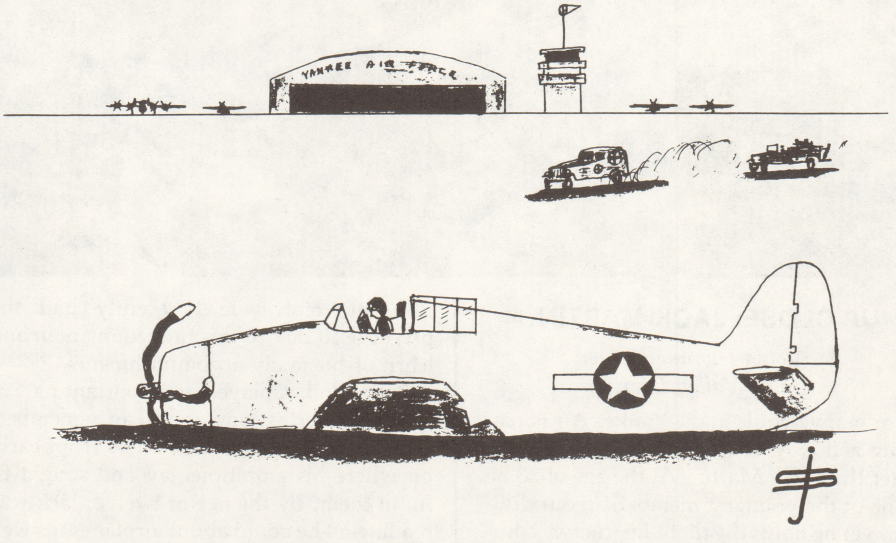
**Aircraft line art courtesy of Squadron Mail Order Catalog. Buff Brief drawings courtesy of Ginny Genova-B-52 Crew Member.**





**Warbirds seen at Oshkosh by Jo. Ivens #1657**






**". . .When landing with gear up, throttle setting requires a maximum power setting. . ."**

**The Northeast Division Board of Directors for 1985/86 Left to right — Back row; Mark Horvath, Vice President, Bob Misskerg, Director, Otto Mueller, Liason Officer, Dennis Golderer, Director, John D. Golderer, Director. Front row; Raymond Golowach, President, Bob Fenner, Director, Nadia Golowach, Treasurer, and Amy Misskerg, Secretary.**
**Photo by John D. Golderer #0855**

## UP CLOSE: JACK MARTIN

*by Velda Hammerbacher*
*Saginaw Valley Division*

For many people in the Yankee Air Force, flying is a way of life. No one knows this better than Jack Martin. At the age of 20 he is one of the youngest members in our division, yet he holds the flight instructor, commercial pilot and multi-engine ratings. We don't see Jack very often; when he's not in school he's living with his family in Mt. Pleasant. However, I recently had the privilege to talk to this fine young man and learn of his many accomplishments.

Aviation has played an important part of Jack's life for as long as he can remember. Unlike most people, Jack knew from early on where his ambitions lay and sought to fulfill them. By the age of twelve, Jack was reading all he could about airplanes, as well as building and flying gas-powered models. When he was 14 years old, Ron Heinlein took him up for his first flight, and Jack knew he was hooked. He took his first flying lesson the day after he turned 15, and soloed on his 16th birthday. But he didn't stop there. During the following year, Jack worked at a flight school in Mt. Pleasant, picking up extra flight hours, as well as further instruction. He then received his multi-engine certificate at the ripe old age of 17!

After graduating from Mt. Pleasant High School in 1982, Jack enrolled in Purdue University's aviation program, one of the most highly selective and prestigious in the country. Now in his third year at Purdue, Jack is currently training on the DC-8 slo-motion simulator. He is also taking classes in crew coordination and jet aircraft operations. By next Christmas, Jack hopes to receive his flight engineer rating on the 727 — yet another milestone on his long list of accomplishments.

After graduation, Jack hopes to obtain a job as a flight engineer for one of the major commercial airlines. His big goal is to become and airline pilot, but he did say he would like to fly WWII fighters at some point in the future. Jack's advice to anyone considering aviation as career is to "study hard, but have fun." Good advice, to be sure, but then anyone with Jack's talent and ambition is bound to go far. For him, the sky truly is the limit.

## AIRCRAFT RESTORATION

*By Dan Miller*

On January 5, 1985, a meeting was held in the General Membership Room of the Yankee Air Force Museum. The meeting was preliminary in nature, designed to introduce and discuss ideas among those interested in Restoring Aircraft.

The following people were in attendance:

Darrel Lotridge . . . Aircraft Procurement
Ted Vedrody . . . . . Aircraft Restoration
Ralph Gilpin . . . . . F-84-F Crew Chief
Hank Koski . . . . . B52-D Crew Chief
Jack Drake . . . . . F-84
Earl Leoffler . . . B-52-D Asst. Crew Chief
Bill Lindsay . . . . . T-33 Restoration
Rod Cramer . . . . . T-33 Restoration
Dan Miller . . . . . Board of Directors

The following items were discussed:

INVENTORY

1. Dan Miller had drawn up a list of Static Aircraft and their respective Crew Chiefs. Some of the A/C designations were incorrect but were most gracefully corrected by their respective Crew Chiefs.

2. All Crew Chiefs present were requested to submit the following information on their A/C by January 26, 1985, which is the last Saturday of the month.

   a. A/C Status - Restoration Progress
   b. Parts Inventory
   c. Parts Location (Where Stored)
   d. Copies of Old Progress Reports, if any
   e. Photographs of A/C in Various Stages of Restoration
   f. A List of Items Necessary to Complete Restoration
   g. Copies of any Type of Correspondence Concerning Static A/C.

   The above mentioned materials will be on file, in a location known to all YAF Officers and Board members. This type of record keeping will help eliminate confusion and duplication of effort.

3. Those present also expressed the need for this type of system for all YAF property such as vehicles, displays, shop tools, A/C support equipment and A/C manuals.

4. Engine exhibits and spare engines were discussed. It seems that the contents of all those large crates just north of the Hangar are somewhat of a mystery. A volunteer will be appointed to solve the mystery and report back so that these items may be catalogued.

5. A list of all vehicles and ground support equipment is in the works. John Spellich has made up a status report for several of the new vehicles we have received from the Ford Motor Company.

RESTORATION

6. Provisions for a permanent restoration area was deemed essential by all present if progress is to be maintained in this area. All agreed that some type of physical barrier be errected to separate Restoration from the rest of the Hangar. It was also suggested that once an A/C is placed in restoration, it and any of its' parts should not be moved.

RESTORATION STAFF

7. Organization of a restoration staff was discussed. All in attendance agreed that this is necessary to speed up the restoration process. This staff should consist of a combination of Certified A & P's and the general membership. General members should be allowed to join as part of the education process. This staff would work on all A/C as the planes came up for restoration.

8. In conjunction with No. 7 above, those in attendance discussed the possibility of some training seminars for the Aircraft Restoration Staff. The need for this is obvious considering some of the mistakes that have been made in the past.

   We have two manuals in mind from which to conduct these seminars; 1) Airframe Maintenance and Repair (Air Force); 2) The Literature Ralph Gilpin Obtained From His Trip To The Smithsonian.

TECH ADVISORY BOARD

9. Organization of a Technical Advisory Board was also discussed. The Advisors would be a member of the YAF considered to be experts in particular areas. One of our present needs is an expert in sheet metal repair. This is presently being worked on and several members have already been contacted.

YAF FORMS

10. Ted Vedrody has developed special forms for keeping track of manhours spent on A/C Restoration; Form YAF M-2. There is also a form for recording maintenance discrepancies; YAF M-2.

SHOP SPACE

11. During the meeting questions were raised concerning the accessibility of the shop area for bench work by all A/C restoration projects. It will be necessary for the Static Aircraft Restoration personnel to have access to this area.

*Continued on page 8*

**T-33 Restoration Crew, Lyle Shepperly, Bill Lindsay, and Rod Cramer. Photo by Norm Jones.**

## YANKEE AIR FORCE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### YANKEE AIR FORCE MEMBERSHIPS

| | |
|---|---|
| Annual Membership | $ 25 |
| Annual Membership - Spouse | 10 |
| Life Membership - (individual) | 500 |
| Senior Life Membership (over 60) | 250 |
| Corporate Membership - Minimum Annual Dues | 500 |
| Initiation Fee (one time fee paid by each new member upon joining) | 10 |

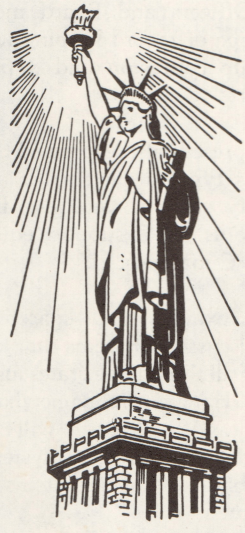
Renewals must be received within 30 days after expiration, or member must renew as a new member with initiator fee.

## DUES INCREASE COMING

The Membership Committee presented a proposal to the Headquarters Board on January 16, 1985, requesting an increase in membership dues. After much discussion the Board agreed to a small increase of $5.00 per full membership, but no increase in spouse membership, effective June 1, 1985. This additional revenue will help cover the increasing cost of the Magazine and other mailings which are sent to members.

## HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS 1985

Artifacts Catalogist ..... 563-4636
Les Reakes
Aircraft Procurement ..... 852-4328
Darrel Lotridge
Aircraft Recovery ..... 532-2303
Ted Vedrody
B-52 Crew Chief ..... 697-1006
Henry Koski
C-47 Crew Chief ..... 437-0869
Pat Nugent
Election .....
Explorer Post #224 ..... 697-0126
Larry Hasse
Facilities - Long Range Planning .. 427-5409
Frank Modlinski
F-84 Crew Chief ..... 478-1944
Jack Drake
F-86 Crew Chief ..... 721-3711
Scott Vetter
F-101 Crew Chief ..... 495-1870
Joe Miller
Finance ..... 482-4120
Nancy Lockwood
Fire Marshall ..... 941-4073
Bill Walter
Flight Department / Chief Pilot ... 769-5598
Dick Bodycombe
Fund Raising .....
Fund Raising - B-24 ..... 697-0126
Larry Hasse
Hangar Rentals ..... 427-5409
Frank Modlinski
Librarian ..... 769-2432
Barbara Cook
Maintenance Operations ..... 729-0139
Coordinator
Bill Ray
Membership ..... 721-3511
John Marks
Memorial Day / Founders Day .... 453-1437
Russ Maxwell
Museum ..... (W) 353-1300
Del Johnston
Office ..... 421-4132
Thurza Kopka
Photography ..... 729-0139
Clint Ray
Programs ..... 562-3283
Jim Hanford
Publicity ..... 565-8848
Wilbur Sanders
RF-84K Crew Chief ..... 469-8831
Ralph Gilpin
Ramp Crew Chief ..... 451-0282
Rich Carpenter
Retail Sales .....
Salvage ..... 697-0863
John Spellich
Supplies ..... 697-7185
Barbara Parks
T-33A Crew Chief ..... 465-4140
Lyle Shepperly
Woodshop ..... 422-7698
Ray Gillman
*Yankee Wings* Editor ..... 532-0477
John Morris
*Yankee Wings* Ads ..... 525-6492
Sam Stephens



## The Yankee Air Force Museum Proudly Announces Its Third Annual Memorial Day Celebration On Monday May 27, 1985

### THE AGENDA FOR THE DAY INCLUDES:

1. Breakfast at the Hangar from 8:00 - 12:00 a.m. - includes: Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, juice and milk or coffee.
2. Fly by of Air Force B-52 Bomber, A-7 Attack and F-4 Fighter Jets.
3. Military diplays by the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines.
4. Warbird fly-in with B-25, P-51, AT-6 etc., World War II E.A.A. Aircraft.
5. Rides in our fully restored C-47 Transport.
6. Tours through our B-52 Bomber.
7. Mock dog fight demonstrations by several local radio control model airplane club's
8. Two performaces by precision Military Drill Team.
9. Exhibitions by a U.S. Army Helicopter Team demonstrating medical evacuation techniques.
10. Tours through our library and museum rooms devoted to the World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam Era's.
11. Lunch will be served from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. - includes: hot dogs, potato chips, chili, coffee or soft drink.
12. Dedication of "Women in Aviation" room.

For further information, directions on how to get there, etc., call Wilbur Sanders, weekdays from 8:00 am. to 4:00 p.m. on (313-337-2611). Or the Y.A.F. Hangar Office 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (313-483-4030).

### YOU - ME - AND THE YANKEE AIR FORCE

When you drive to Willow Run
Alone, or with another;
What is really on your mind?
I ask you Sister - Brother.

We hope your reason is to build
A Museum for all to see;
Preserving famous Warbirds
That protected you and me.

Some of you, not old enough
To see them in a war,
Still care enough to have a part
In what Y.A.F. stands for.

If you think we're moving slow,
Don't forget that we are new,
And whatever is accomplished
Depends on ME and YOU.

Every group that ever formed
Had growing pains you know.
Just do YOUR part and as you drive,
Say, "YAF-WE LOVE YOU SO".

*Graham Armstrong #1322*

### DEATH NOTICE

Norm Smallwood #539 died in the night on Wednesday January 16, 1985, of a heart attack. He was just 40 years old and left his wife and 3 children, the youngest just 2 years old. Norm was Fund Raising Chairman for Headquarters for 1984 and before that he and June worked parking for the Air Shows. They helped in many other ways. Norm will be sadly missed.

### !!!!ATTENTION!!!! YAF MEMBERS

*from Russ Maxwell*

We need workers/volunteers for our Memorial Day and Founder's Day Ceremonies. Here is your chance to participate in two of the biggest YAF sponsored events of 1985. Anyone, and everyone, is welcome to volunteer their talents and expertise to make these events memorable. Please attend our Committee Planning Meetings — times and dates are posted on the Committee Bulletin Board in the Lunchroom. Bring your positive thoughts and ideas, and help make this the most spectacular Memorial Day/Founder's Day Ever!!!

**MEMORIAL DAY MAY 26 & 27**
**FOUNDERS DAY SEPT. 21 & 22**

### SECURITY DIRECTIVE No. 1

*John A. Morris*
*Administrative Lt.*
*YAF Security*

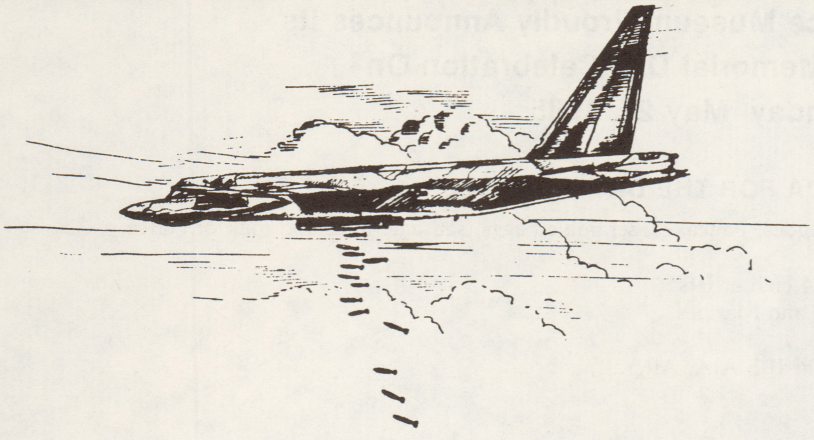
The Headquarters Security Committee will be holding regular meetings on the second Saturday of each month. These meetings will be held in the Willow Run Hangar at 10:00 a.m., and will be used as training sessions. The first three (3) dates are: February 9, March 9, and April 13, 1985. Anyone interested in joining the security staff is encouraged to attend.

### FLOWER FUND

A flower fund for the Headquarter Division has been started. When I'm notified of the death of a Yankee Air Force member the flower fund will be for flowers or cash contributions to a charitable organization.

Please notify Nelson Lowe at 525-5283 or the Yankee Air Force Hangar at 483-4030.

*Nelson Lowe*
*#1388*



## BUFF BRIEFS

*by Toni M. Koski, #0469, B52 Crew*

We're sure everyone has noticed, by now, that the B52 is resting on it's permanent pad (home). She looks very majestic and impressive (especially from Ecorse Road). 677 is honored to have been bestowed with the distinction of being an everlasting memorial dedicated to all those aircrew members who lost their lives in Southeast Asia.

The Team from Wurtsmith, AFB, who once again, showed their dedication and expertise throughout the entire operation, deserve a hearty thanks. Without their help, the aircraft would, probably, still be sitting on the Ramp.

We would, also, like to thank those dedicated and diligent crew/YAF members who gave so unselfishly of their time over the past few months. Without their zest and drive, this project would never have seen completion. We are indebted to all of you.

One of our newer crew members, Ginny Genova, has eagerly begun restoration on the Bomb-Nav Seats. This talented artist is making plans to repaint and touch-up the interior Flight Deck. We are so happy to have someone with such talent!

Finally, we present another story in the continuing saga of the B52 Technical Orders. Our zealous Hank Grudzien has prepared a text on the Bomb-Door System. Thanks, Hank!

## BOMB DOOR SYSTEM

The bomb door system consists of the bomb doors with latches and actuator struts, a control system, and a hydraulic system. Various electrical control systems actuate the hydraulic system which furnishes the necessary pressure to open, hold open, and close the bomb doors. The bomb doors may be opened by the pilot through a bomb door control switch or salvo (jettison) switch or by the radar navigator through a bomb door open switch, salvo switch, bombing navigational system (BNS) or a manual emergency release system. The bomb doors are closed by the pilot and radar navigator bomb door control switches, and after the bombs are dropped, by the BNS. The bomb doors cannot be closed without hydraulic pressure.

The bomb doors consist of six panels on each side of the bomb bay, three upper and three lower panels. Seals on the edge of the doors prevent entrance of moving air and water into the bomb bay when doors are closed.

The door actuator struts are attached to the forward and aft end of the lower doors. These struts are also attached to the bomb door hydraulic actuators mounted on the forward and aft bomb bay bulkheads. The hydraulic actuators move the struts which open and close the doors. The doors are held in the closed and latched position by bomb door latches (at each end of the bomb bay) which engage latch rollers attached to the end panels of each lower door.

Air turbine-driven hydraulic packs 1, 2 and 4 supply hydraulic pressure to the bomb door hydraulic actuators.

Join us next month when our selected T.O. Summary will be the Air Refueling System.

## WILDCAT

*Continued from page 2*

beer barrels. And later that day, I suffered a crushing disappointment—those same beer barrels, not the sleek and deadly-looking Corsairs, were to be my steeds when dashing about the skies, learning to joust with foes who would be blessed with much prettier-looking mounts. No groom in a shotgun wedding ever bemoaned his fate more loudly than I did!

Within days, however, my moans changed to sighs of relief. While I was discovering first-hand the forgiving nature of my flying beer barrels, the Corsairs were living up to their Training Command reputation as Ensign killers. (I would have five more years of flying high-performance fighters under my belt before I finally took one of these bent-wing birds into the blue.)

The Wildcat I flew was the last version built—the FM-2 series, now called by world aviation historians Green and Swanborough "the definitive Wildcat." It had been cleaned up considerably over the earlier F4F versions, including removal of the two outboard machine guns, leaving four 50's mounted close inboard in the wings. . .removal of some heavy armor plate. . .and the addition of a nine-cylinder Wright engine with a single-stage, two-speed supercharger, that cranked out 1,350 "horses"—a new high for the Wildcat. Visually, it could be identified by its bigger, more blunt nose (due to the larger-diameter engine inside) and by a taller fin and rudder.

Clambering aboard the Wildcat was an exercise that brought back memories of the obstacle course at Pre-Flight School. The barrel-shaped fuselage and mid-mounted wing put the cockpit out of reach of anyone other than Clark Kent. But once settled into the seat, the view of the surrounding neighborhood in all directions was excellent—something like being perched atop a ten-foot stepladder.

*Continued on page 9*

## RESTORATION

*Continued from page 5*

BUDGETS

12. All air craft crew chiefs were requested to start work on budgets for this year. If the budgets are approved it should be cash on hand available for disbursement through the Board Member responsible for the Static A/C area.

PAST LETTER

13. All Crew Chiefs present were requested to submit all past letters written regarding A/C Restoration and Procurements. This is necessary to avoid duplication of effort and centralize all correspondences for the museums records.

14. Ralph Gilpin offered those present information on techniques and standard operating procedures used by the Paul E. Graber facility. Ralph recently attended the Smithsonian Seminar on A/C Restoration. The point was made by Ralph that many of things done by the Smithsonian are too expensive to be practical for the YAF but they offer something to strive for.

**The author's FM-2 Wildcat at an auxiliary field north of NAS Green Cove Springs, March, 1945.**

## WILDCAT

*Continued from page 8*

A glance around the interior, however, proved one thing—just about the only modern convenience for the sea-going fighter jockey was the relief tube! With no hydraulic power system, the Wildcat's wheels had to be cranked up and down—twenty-nine stubborn turns of a folding-handle crank low on the side of the right console. To open or close cowl flaps to regulate engine cooling, there was another crank handle. . .toy-sized, this time . . .high on the left side of the instrument panel. And wing flaps were raised or lowered with a simple two-position vacuum switch on the left console. With the exception of the plunger-type control knob for prop pitch on the left side of the front panel, other controls were familiar enough.

Taxiing the Wildcat was like riding a unicycle, thanks to both the great all-around visibility and the precarious balance of the narrow-tread landing gear and soft oleo struts. Then, lined up on the business end of the runway and with the check-off list completed, the fun really began! From Cub to Corsair, takeoffs usually follow pretty much the same pattern—center the stick, add power, tap the rudder a couple of times to keep the nose from wandering . . .and away you go.

Not so with the FM-2! Give that gal her head on a takeoff run and you could be in for an adrenalin-pumping journey over whatever landscape happened to be immediately to the left of the duty runway if the capricious tomboy personality took over. My answer—developed after my first few white-knuckle takeoffs—was to hold the stick firmly forward and to the right as far as it would go. . .move the throttle to full takeoff power. . .relax toe pressure on the brakes, lagging a bit on the right brake . . .and then do a tap dance on the pedals to keep the nose pointed down the runway as the prop blades took their first few big bites of air.

When the question of who was flying the plane was finally settled, the Wildcat would leap joyously into the blue. Then came the next challenge—getting the landing gear up with a minimum of aerobatics. New Wildcat pilots were easy to spot by their roller-coaster climbouts as the gear came up in a series of jerks. Eventually, though, you learned to rest the index finger of your left hand lightly on the stick and slowly and smoothly crank up the gear with your right hand and arm while trying not to wiggle the rest of your body.

With the wheels in the wells and everything else cleaned up, normal climb for the FM-2 was a satisfying 5,000 feet a minute. . .which, when the altimeter passed 10,000 feet, deteriorated somewhat to about 5,000 feet a month! Normal cruise was a leisurely 130 knots (as was her terminal velocity, I think!) but within her low-speed, low-altitude limits, the Wildcat could perform any task you asked and was safer than an armchair.

Her flight characteristics, particularly stalls, were unbelievably friendly. Fully stalled out, with the stick jammed back into your lap, there was still excellent aileron control. I've slow-rolled a Wildcat at speeds below 80 knots without losing altitude. And that was within a gnat's eyelash of her stalling speed, which was in the low 70's, straight and level. As for turning ability, she'd turn so tight in a stimulated dogfight that there were times I'd check to be sure the rudder in my gunsight wasn't my own!

Approach and landing introduced no problems. Coming over the fence at 80 knots, nose-high, you still had fine visibility ahead and to the sides, and responsive control as well. With the runway under the wheels, a slow reduction to idle while holding the nose-high attitude uniformly resulted in a smooth three-point landing.

As soon as the wheels kissed the runway, however, the Wildcat's unpredictable nature once again asserted itself. The narrow tread and less-than-ideal oleo shock struts combined to provide a potential for side-to-side rolling tendencies that could be downright bewildering in even a gentle crosswind. The only answer was to concentrate on keeping the nose pointed straight down the runway while ignoring the sometimes-fearful tipping of the wings. (I once saw a Wildcat dragging a wingtip on rollout with both wheels firmly in contact with the runway, thanks to a soft oleo on the lee side of a crosswind. . .and that wingtip was normally some eight feet above the surface in a normal three-point attitude!)

Well, that's about it. It's been forty years since my brief but absorbing love affair with the multi-faceted personality that was the FM-2 Wildcat— along-ago romance chronicled in unfeeling statistics representing a four-month span on now-yellowing pages of my old logbook. And still I find it hard to think of a farewell. So long, Wildcat. So long, mother-teacher-playmate. So long, beer barrel. We sure had a helluva great time together!

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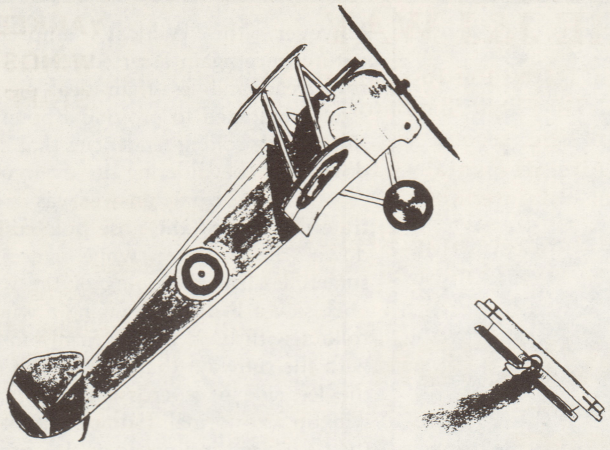


## TALE SPINS

*By Jack B. Stankrauff #0228*

### DEADLY CAMEL TALLIED COMBAT KILLS

Reigning as the supreme Allied fighter in World War I, the Sopwith Camel achieved 1,294 aerial victories in only 18 months of combat.

### IMPRESSIVE HISTORY

So-named because of the hump appearance of the engine cowling, the Camel first appeared on December 22, 1916. (The fledgling U.S. Air Service purchased 143 Camels.) It first saw combat on June 4, 1917 when a Camel chased a German scout plane (without result) over the coast of France.

### AVIATION FIRSTS

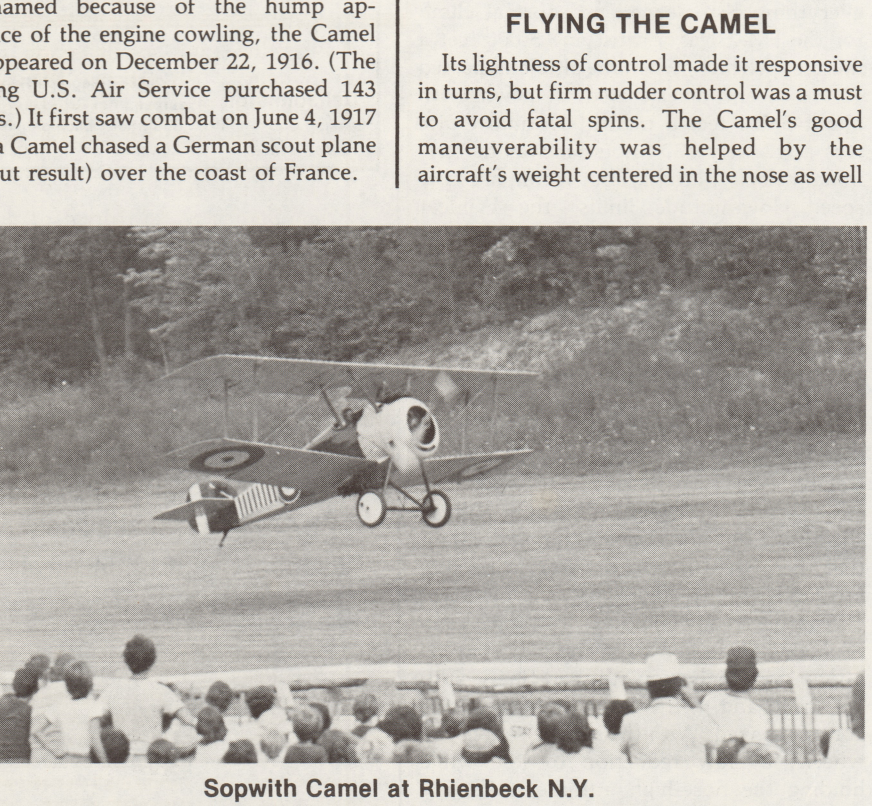
This fighter was the only British (for that matter, Allied) aircraft to make aviation history with several firsts. Its Vickers machine guns were synchronized to fire through the propeller—the first British fighter so equipped. (Its ammunition belts had breakable aluminum links.) Two Camels, launched from the new aircraft carrier; Hermes, attacked the zeppelin sheds at Tondern on July 18, 1918—their first carrier-launched aircraft attack. A Camel, piloted by Canadian Capt. A.R. Brown, downed Baron Manfred von Richtofen. Camels underwent trials as parasite aircraft for airships.

### FLYING THE CAMEL

Its lightness of control made it responsive in turns, but firm rudder control was a must to avoid fatal spins. The Camel's good maneuverability was helped by the aircraft's weight centered in the nose as well as its powerful engine torque. (The German Fokker D. VII proved a match for the Camel in combat.) These flying control behavioristics could, and sometimes did, bring an abrupt end to the careers of novice pilots who couldn't handle the Camel!

### DESCRIPTION

Equipped with a 130-HP Clerget rotary engine, the Camel could fly at a maximum speed of 108 mph at 6,500 feet. The service ceiling was 19,000 feet. Two Vickers .30-cal. machine guns provided the plane's armament. Some 6,500 Camels were built which served in all theatres.



**Sopwith Camel at Rhienbeck N.Y.**
**Photo by Jo. Ivens #1657**

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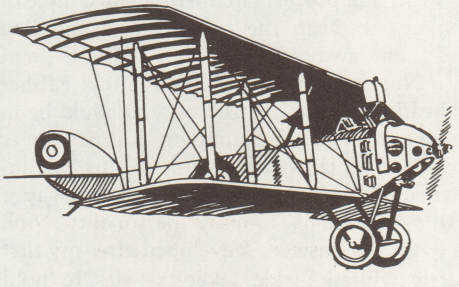
### THANK YOU

At this time I would like to thank everyone in the YAF who helped in any way with the needs of the Spanich family in a very hard time. Both Jack and Mary Ann will be missed at the hangar as well as the Air Shows. As Jack once said to me "Nothing is forever but Love and Friendship". I thank God we had them both. Again thank you very much.

*Crew Chief*
*#126970*



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### YANKEE AIR FORCE DIVISIONS

**Headquarters, Willow Run, YAF First Division**
P.O. Box 1100
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
313-483-4030

Meetings 1st Wednesday of each month, 7:30 - YAF Hangar. All Divisions are encouraged to participate in the meetings at Willow Run and to be a part of the activities at National Headquarters.

**Northeast, YAF Second Division**
Essex County Airport
125 Passaic Ave.
Fairfield, N.J. 07006
201-575-9621

Meetings 1st Wed. of each month, 7:30, YAF Reddy Room at the rear of the Essex County Improvement Authority Building.

**Mid-Michigan, YAF Third Division**
Flint Bishop Airport
G-3101 West Bristol Road
Flint, MI 48507

Meetings 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7:00, Skybolt Aviation Hangar, Bishop.

**WI/IL State Line, YAF Fourth Div.**
P.O. Box 1667
Janesville, WI 53545

**Saginaw Valley, YAF Fifth Division**
Harry Browne Airport
Saginaw, MI

Meetings 3rd Tuesday of each month. Career Opportunity Center, Saginaw, Michigan.


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### YAF HEADQUARTERS - WILLOW RUN AIRPORT

The Yankee Air Force National Headquarters, Museum, Hangar and Flight Line is located at historic Willow Run Airport, in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Willow Run was built in 1941 by the U.S. Army to be the air base for Ford Motor Companys B-24 bomber plant, located on the west side of the field. The airport was owned by the University of Michigan until the mid 1970s and is now owned and operated by the Wayne County Road Commission which strongly supports our efforts to preserve a part of the history of Willow Run and Southeastern Michigan, as well as historical aviation in general.

To drive to Headquarters from the East or South, exit from I-94 at Belleville Rd., drive North to Tyler Rd. (about 1 mile), turn left on Tyler, then turn right on Beck and proceed to the Airport entrance on Beck Rd. From the West or North, follow Ecorse to Beck Rd., turn South on Beck and proceed to the Airport entrance. The YAF is located in the Northernmost hangar on the east ramp.

Headquarters is always opens to all members who wish to visit or participate in restoration projects.

# COMING ATTRACTIONS

**March**

6 - Headquarters Membership Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
6 - Northeast (2nd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (NE)
12 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
13 - Deadline for additions to agenda for National Board Meeting
13 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (MM)
16 - B-52 Crew Meeting - 10:00 a.m. (WR)
19 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
21 - National Board Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
(Thursday this month only - at the Tin Lizzie)
21 - Explorer Post #224 Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
26 - Wisconsin-Illinois (4th Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (WI)
26 - Deadline for items to appear in June issue *Yankee Wings*
27 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (MM)

**April**

3 - Headquarters Membership Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
3 - Northeast (2nd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (NE)
9 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
10 - Deadline for additions to agenda for National Board Meeting.
10 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (MM)
16 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
17 - National Board Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
18 - Explorer Post #224 Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
20 - B-52 Crew Meeting - 10:00 a.m. (WR)
23 - Wisconsin-Illinois (4th Division) Membership Meeting (WI)
23 - Deadline for items to appear in July issue of *Yankee Wings.*
24 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (MM)

**May**

1 - Headquarters Membership Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
1 - Northeast (2nd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (NE)
8 - Deadline for additions to agenda for National Board Meeting
8 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (MM)
14 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
15 - National Board Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
16 - Explorer Post #224 Meeting - 7:30 (WR)
18 - B-52 Crew Meeting - 10:00 a.m. (WR)
21 - Saginaw Valley (5th Division) Membership Meeting - 7:30 (SV)
21 - Deadline for items to appear in August issue of *Yankee Wings.*
22 - Mid-Michigan (3rd Division) Board Meeting - 7:30 (MM)
28 - Wisconsin-Illinois (4th Division) Membership Meeting - (WI)

*Stan Reich*
*YAF #055*


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## ADDRESS CHANGES

We try very hard to keep our mailing list up-to-date. When we are notified that one of you is not getting your monthly Magazine we check it out. There have been times when it has been our fault, (we are human, and volunteers, you know), but usually it is a matter of a change of address which we did not get.

Perhaps you don't realize we are mailing Third Class (to save money) and that Third Class mail is not forwarded by the Post Office. Those magazines, flyers and what-ever else we have sent you goes into the "Big round file" forever and you don't have your mail and the YAF has wasted about 75¢ or more.

Be sure to send us your change of address as soon as possible. Send it to:

Yankee Air Force Inc.
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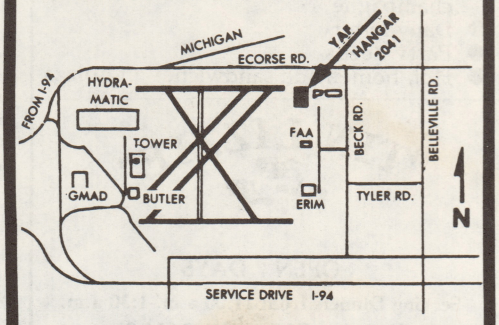
Attention: Membership

Thank You
*Barbara Sutton*
*Editors Assistant*

**YAF HEADQUARTERS — WILLOW RUN AIRPORT**

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